

STATE OF ALABAMA

Information Technology Standard

Standard 900-00S1: IT Procurement

1. INTRODUCTION:

Products and services for information technology (IT) represent a significant portion of the State's technology expenditures each year. In most circumstances IT products and services are procured through the State's competitive bid process. It is important that this process is competitive in nature, as defined by state statute, and that vendors are evaluated in a fair and impartial manner.

2. OBJECTIVE:

Establish minimum standards for the development of IT competitive bid documents.

3. SCOPE:

These requirements apply to all state agencies, boards and commissions with the exception of the Legislative and Judicial branches. This policy does not apply to educational institutions.

Nothing in this document shall be construed as giving purchasing authority to any state agency, department, board, bureau, commission, authority, public corporation, or instrumentality that does not otherwise have purchasing authority.

4. REQUIREMENTS:

4.1 SOLICITATION DOCUMENTS

Policy: Information Services Division (ISD) shall establish minimum standards for the development of IT competitive bid documents including Invitation-to-Bid (ITB) and Request-for-Proposal (RFP) processes.

4.1.1 Invitation to Bid

The Invitation to Bid (ITB) is a document used by agencies to procure IT goods and services through the competitive bidding process of State Purchasing. The ITB sets the minimum specifications for the product or service and establishes the qualifications that a vendor must meet in order to bid. The ITB also provides administrative and contractual information to explain some of the standard business practices of the State.

The format of the ITB varies depending on the type of goods or services required. ISD has worked closely with State Purchasing to develop the prescribed ITB templates for procurement of IT hardware, software and professional services. These templates are only the starting point. Agencies must add their own contracting experience to ensure successful procurement.

4.1.2 Request for Proposals

In some circumstances, IT professional services are not procured through the State's competitive bid process, but through a Request-for-Proposals (RFP). It is important for the State to ensure that this process is also competitive in nature and that vendors are evaluated in a fair and impartial manner.

In general terms, an RFP is a document distributed by an agency seeking solutions from equipment vendors, consultants, or service providers addressing operational problems or management issues facing the agency.

4.1.3 Bid Evaluation Matrix

Policy: ISD shall establish recommended guidelines for the evaluation of IT procurement responses.

State Procurement requires agencies to submit a Bid Evaluation Matrix (BEM) along with an ITB. The BEM is an evaluation checklist that contains the critical specifications and requirements that the vendor's bid must meet in order to be considered for the contract award. Contracts are awarded to the lowest responsible vendor meeting all of the bid specifications and requirements.

Bid evaluation starts with a determination of the lowest bid. The lowest bid is then evaluated using the BEM. If that bid meets all the specifications and requirements of the BEM, the agency recommends award to that vendor. If the lowest bid fails the BEM evaluation, the agency documents the criteria that was not met and proceeds to perform the same BEM evaluation on the next lowest bid. This process continues until the agency either finds a successful bid or disqualifies all bidders. In the event that all bids are disqualified, the agency will work with State Purchasing to either cancel the bid or re-bid the contract.

ISD maintains standard ITB, RFP, and BEM templates for IT procurement. These templates include sections and language recognized as best practices in the solicitation of IT products and services. Templates for these solicitation documents will be posted on the ISD website (<http://isd.alabama.gov/planning/planning.aspx>) along with examples to assist agencies in developing their own documents. Agencies should work closely with State Purchasing to refine these templates to suit their specific procurement requirements.

4.2 INCLUDE SECURITY REQUIREMENTS IN ACQUISITION CONTRACTS

Acquisition contracts and solicitation documents for information systems and services shall include, either explicitly or by reference, security requirements that describe:

- (i) required security capabilities and/or controls;
- (ii) required design and development processes;
- (iii) required test and evaluation procedures; and
- (iv) required documentation.

Security requirements and/or security specifications shall be based on an assessment of risk and shall be stated in accordance with applicable laws, Executive Orders, directives, policies, and standards.

Requirements in solicitation documents shall permit updating the security requirements as new threats/vulnerabilities are identified and as new technologies are implemented.

4.3 INFORMATION SYSTEM DOCUMENTATION

Required information system documentation shall include security configuration settings and security implementation guidance. Documentation shall address user and system administrator guidance and information regarding the implementation of the security controls in the information system. Documentation shall describe the functional properties of the security controls employed within the information system with sufficient detail to permit analysis and testing of the controls.

5. DEFINITIONS:

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

6.1 POLICY

Information Technology Policy 900-00: Information Technology Procurement

6.2 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Signed by Art Bess., Assistant Director

7. DOCUMENT HISTORY:

Version	Release Date	Comments
Original	9/25/2008	